

SAFE FOOD DONATION

Tis' The Season for Giving

safe

9.48 %

of Benton-Franklin County residents report food insecurity

About 12% of people statewide and about 10% of people locally report that they suffer from food insecurity. In addition, Washington State recently passed legislation that set a statewide goal of reducing food waste by 50% by the year 2030. How can we contribute to a solution for decreasing food insecurity and waste at the local level? Community residents can choose to donate certain foods to the needy through local food rescue operations (called "donated food distributing organizations" in Washington), as long as those foods have been safely handled.

Are Private Citizens Allowed To Donate Prepared Food?

Yes, private citizens (called "donors") can donate prepared food as long as the food has been prepared in an approved location and meets certain safety standards. Based on standards set in the Washington State Food Code (WAC 246-215), here are the rules to remember when donating food:

- **Donation of food must be done through a registered food distributing organization.** Food cannot be distributed directly to the needy persons by private citizens. For safety and tracking purposes, prepared food must be donated through a donated food distributing organization that is registered with the Benton-Franklin Health District, like a local food pantry or soup kitchen.
- **A donor kitchen must be used for preparation.** A donor kitchen is a kitchen that can be used to safely handle the food for donation, and **may not be a residential kitchen in a private home.** Search for a local church, community center, or commercial kitchen that may have space for you to safely prepare foods for donation.
- **Food must be maintained at proper temperatures** during storage, preparation, and transport. Foods should be prepared the same day of donation and perishables must be maintained below 41°F when cold, or above 135°F when hot.

Can Foods be Donated From a Private Home?

Prepared foods may not be donated from a private home, but certain low-risk foods can. Here is a list of foods that can be donated from a private home:

- **Non-perishable, non-ready-to-eat foods** like dry pasta or beans.
- **Non-perishable, ready-to-eat foods in an intact commercial package** like commercially packaged pastries and canned foods.
- **Commercially packaged, frozen foods.**
- **Non-perishable baked goods** that have been prepared in a safe manner.

Benton-Franklin Health District
Food Safety Program
(509) 460-4205



SAFE MEAT DONATION

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Can Hunters Donate Meat? Yes!

Washington State hunters can choose to donate all or portions of their hunted meat to the needy, as long as safe handling, butchering, and wrapping practices are followed.

Based on standards set in the Washington State Food Code (WAC 246-215), here are the rules to remember when donating hunted meat:

- **Only game animals may be donated.** Game animals include mammals such as reindeer, elk, deer, antelope, water buffalo, bison, rabbit, squirrel, opossum, raccoon, nutria, or muskrat, and non-aquatic reptiles such as land snakes. Wild-caught animals not included in the definition of "game" and that may not be donated are poultry (turkey, duck, goose), livestock (cattle), sheep, swine, goat, horse, mule, or other equine. These items may be donated if they are USDA inspected product.
- **Game must be received by a certified party.** Game animals for donation must be collected by either a law enforcement officer certified by a jurisdiction in the State of Washington or from a hunter licensed by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- **Clean field dressing practices must be used.** Game animals for donation must be field dressed to remove the viscera (intestines, stomachs, etc.). The skin may or may not be removed.
- **Carcasses must be stored at proper temperatures.** Meat must be stored cold (below 41°F) and handled to prevent temperature abuse and contamination during transport to the processing facility.
- **Game meat must be processed by an approved meat cutter.** An approved meat cutter (butcher) must wrap and label the meat with the statement ***"Uninspected wild game meat; thoroughly cook to 165°F internal temperature."***
- **Documentation must be provided with the meat.** The meat must be accompanied by a written statement identifying the name and address of the person who harvested the game; the license, permit, or tag number and kind of animal provided; the date killed; the county and area where it was taken; and the hunter's signature. This documentation must go with the product to the donated food distributing organization (food bank).

Connect with Donation Partners

Talk with your local food distributing organization to be sure they will accept your properly processed, hunted meats. Local and state organizations such as Tri-Cities Food Bank, Second Harvest, the Tri-Cities Union Gospel Mission, and Northwest Harvest can be contacted for food donation. Dial 2-1-1 or (877) 211-9274 for a toll-free alternative to connect with other community-based organizations and government agencies, including local food pantries.

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